R E P O R T R E S U M E S

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NEGRO BOYCOTTS OF JIM CROW SCHOOLS IN THE NORTH, 1897-1925.

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PUB DATE 67

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.25 HC-$0.60 13P.

DESCRIPTORS- *NEGROES, *SCHOOL SEGREGATION, *HISTORICAL REVIEWS, *SCHOOL BOYCOTTS, NORTHERN SCHOOLS, COMMUNITY ACTION, NEGRO LEADERSHIP, SCHOOL INTEGRATION, INTEGRATION METHODS, INTEGRATION LITIGATION, MAJORITY ATTITUDES, CAUCASIANS, BOARD OF EDUCATION ROLE, ALTON, ILLINOIS, EAST ORANGE, NEW JERSEY, SPRINGFIELD, OHIO, DAYTON

THIS ARTICLE PRESENTS A HISTORICAL REVIEW OF NEGRO SCHOOL BOYCOTTS FROM 1897 TO 1925 IN ALTON, ILL., EAST ORANGE, N.J., AND SPRINGFIELD AND DAYTON, OHIO, WHERE ATTEMPTS WERE MADE TO INTRODUCE RACIALLY SEPARATE SCHOOLS. THE REVIEW DESCRIBES THE PROTEST MOVEMENT AND THE VICISSITUDES OF THE INTEGRATION ATTEMPTS IN EACH CITY. ALL THE NEGRO PROTEST MOVEMENTS WERE CONSERVATIVE ATTEMPTS TO PRESERVE EXISTING INTEGRATED EDUCATION AS SANCTIONED BY LAW. HOWEVER, ALTHOUGH IN THE TWO STATES WHERE THE ISSUE WAS BROUGHT TO COURT, THE HIGHEST JUDICIAL AUTHORITY SUSTAINED THE NEGROES' CASE, THE SCHOOLS IN THESE CITIES REMAINED SEGREGATED. AMONG THE SUGGESTED REASONS FOR THE FAILURE OF THE INTEGRATION EFFORTS WERE THE EFFECTS OF CLEAVAGES WITHIN THE NEGRO COMMUNITY DUE TO CONFLICTING SELF-INTERESTS. BUT THE DECISIVE FACTOR IN THE DEFEATS IS SAID TO HAVE BEEN THE ATTITUDE OF THE DOMINANT WHITES WHOSE PREJUDICES INFLUENCED POLITICIANS AND SCHOOL BOARDS. THIS ARTICLE WAS PUBLISHED IN "INTEGRATED EDUCATION," VOLUME 5, NUMBER 4, ISSUE 28, AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 1967. (NH)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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NEGRO BOYCOTTS OF JIM CROW SCHOOLS IN THE NORTH, 1897-1925

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Northern school segregation and Negro protest against it are both nearly as old as American public education itself. Little known, however, is the fact that beginning with the Reconstruction period Negroes, in the course of the struggle against jim crow schools and classes, at times undertook what would today be called direct action.

This paper examines school boycotts which occurred in four northern cities during the first quarter of the twentieth century: around 1900 in Alton, Illinois and East Orange, New Jersey and during the early 1920's in Springfield and Dayton, Ohio. Both pairs of boycotts took place during periods of rapidly increasing discrimination — the first set at a time when northern whites were becoming markedly sympathetic toward southern racial policies, and the second pair during the period of striking growth in segregation practices associated with the Great Migration that began during the First World War. All four boycotts were in states with civil rights laws prohibiting de jure school segregation; all four were attempts to conserve the integrated patterns of an older generation.

ALTON, ILLINOIS

An early school boycott was the lengthy campaign conducted by colored citizens of Alton, Illinois for over a decade, beginning in 1897. The city's system of integrated schools had functioned since shortly after the Civil War, even though Alton was located in southern Illinois where practically every town had for years maintained jim crow schools in violation of the state law. Not until 1896, in response to pressure from real estate dealers who claimed that mixed schools discouraged prospective home buyers from nearby St. Louis, did the Republican-dominated city council decide to discontinue them.

Most of Alton's Negroes lived in its northern part, and it was those in integrated neighborhoods who particularly resented this jim crow policy and furnished the leadership to oppose it. The chief figure in the protest was Scott Bibb, an ex-slave employed as a fireman at the Illinois Glass Company. Under the new regulation put in effect in the fall of 1897, his two older children, Ambrose and Minnie, who were in the fourth and second grades respectively, would be obliged to walk a mile and a half to the new all-Negro school, where previously they had walked one and a half blocks. Bibb and his closest colleagues in the movement, were blue-collar workers employed by prestigious local businesses. Together, they forged a remarkable unity within the Negro community. Although ministers were conspicuously absent from the names of those identified with the movement, considering the limited range of economic opportunities open to Alton Negroes, the prominence of manual workers in the leadership is not otherwise surprising. It is noteworthy that through the eleven years of agitation the white upper-class

employers of Bibb and his associates did not discourage their activities.

When the school year opened on Monday afternoon, September 20, 1897, most of the Negro youngsters stayed at home and ignored instructions to attend the ironically named Frederick Douglass and Elijah Lovejoy schools. At a mass meeting that evening the aggrieved parents declared that they would not abide by the illegal scheme, and announced a dual strategy of boycott and legal action. For the next two days the Negro children conducted what in today's terminology would be a "sit-in" at the Washington and Lincoln Schools, where they were treated as "visitors" and not permitted to participate in recitations. On Wednesday afternoon school authorities changed tactics and ordered the "visitors" from the classrooms. The youngsters, however, refused to leave. Meeting in emergency session the school board requested police assistance to enforce the segregation policy. The mayor complied, and later in the day told a Negro delegation that "I propose to keep the niggers out of schools with white children . . . if I have to use every policeman I have got in the city to do it." The next morning, when the children tried to enter the white schools the police ordered them away. The youngsters left peaceably.

At the end of the week a delegation went to Springfield to obtain legal advice from a prominent local citizen who had over the years been counted a friend of the race — the Civil War general, ex-Governor, former U.S. Senator, and presidential candidate of the Gold Democrats in 1896, John M. Palmer. The delegation returned with the heartening news that he would assist in the case. Besides Palmer, who died in 1900, the Negroes employed an Alton attorney and former Republican state senator, John J. Brenholt, and promptly instituted a law suit in circuit court to compel the authorities to admit their children to their former schools.

Meanwhile, the boycott proved remarkably effective. By the end of the first week almost no Negroes were attending. As late as mid-February only six of the 145 school-age Negroes were in attendance. The boycott gradually declined in strength, but Bibb and several others kept their children out of the public schools un til 1908. During this period of eleven years the case reached the state supreme court five times. In each instance the Court overturned the jury verdicts because, as it declared in 1908, they "were a product of passion, prejudice or hostility to the law." Not until the fifth time it reviewed the case, did the Court, conceding that it was "utterly futile" for the Bibbs to hope for a fair trial, direct the admission of the two children to their old schools.

White Altonians emasculated even this clearcut decision. The city's attorney insisted that the decision applied only to the Bibb children; others would have to institute their own law suits. To dampen complaints about the long distance some children had to travel to attend the two all-Negro schools, the school board created one-room colored annexes at two white schools. Moreover, Negro ministers were persuaded to endorse the separate schools; by the end of the summer Baptist preachers were advising that segregation provided Negroes with teaching positions, and that prudence and common sense dictated acceptance of the jim crow schools.

Bibb remained undaunted. Despite threats that Negroes would be kept out of the white schools by force, at least 25 applied for admission to them on opening day in September, 1908. Again Bibb led a boycott, and except for the Douglass school, few attended the jim crow schools. The situation at Douglass, however, where none of the students had withdrawn, clearly revealed a growing disunity in the Negro community. One can only conjecture about its causes. Undoubtedly whites convinced some influential Negroes, such as the min-

isters to oppose the movement. One can only surmise that over the years so forceful a personality as Bibb antagonized some individuals. Finally, even after all the years of effort, not even Minnie and Ambrose were in school.

White officials seemed determined to destroy Bibb's reputation. When Ambrose, now 21, took a job in another state, rumors were circulated that he had accepted a bribe to keep him from integrating the schools. When Minnie, who was now 19, attempted to enroll in the high school, the superintendent assigned her to the third grade, alleging that her private tutoring had been inadequate. Minnie refused to enroll in the class. The Alton *Evening Telegraph* used this "deplorable ignorance" of Minnie Bibb as the basis for condemning her father's "reprehensible" leadership; it warned "the good colored people" that if they continued to be "beguiled" by this "prejudiced leader," their own children would suffer the fate of the unfortunate Minnie.

Bibb threatened another legal battle, this time on behalf of his younger children. The campaign to discredit him proved successful, however, especially after those whites most friendly to the Negroes suggested that the segregation was really in the Negroes' best interest. By September 25, over half of the Negroes were back in attendance. Deserted on all sides, Bibb finally capitulated at the end the end of the month and enrolled his three younger children at the Washington school annex.

EAST ORANGE, NEW JERSEY

East Orange, at the turn of the century, was a rapidly growing suburb of Newark, its Negro population increasing about twice as fast as its white population. Negroes lived in all wards, but they were concentrated in certain neighborhoods; and white perception of the Negro increase was heightened by the fact that over three-fourths of the Negro pupils were enrolled in two schools — Eastern and Ashland. Officials maintained that the presence of a large number of over age Negro children, retarded because of the deficiencies of the southern schools from which they came, created problems. In 1899, when the proportion of Negro pupils at Eastern had reached about 11%, the board of education created a separate class for the retarded Negroes. Since only some of the Negroes were segregated, the authorities hoped that they were technically within the law. (In fact, although the Negro leaders seriously considered going to court, they, too, realized that school officials had successfully beclouded the legal issues.)

The Negro citizens were indignant. They suspected that what was called an "experiment" was simply an entering wedge for a completely segregated system. They contended, moreover, that some clearly average students were placed in the "special" class. Mass meetings were held at the town's two most prominent colored churches — the aristocratic Calvary Baptist Church and the more middle-class, but very "respectable" Mt. Olive Baptist Church. As a result of the vigorous protest, those who insisted obtained the reassignment of their children to their original rooms.

Protest leaders were appalled, however, that several poor families among the recent migrants continued to send their children to the ungraded class. Indeed, the Negro community was not unanimous. In late October Mrs. J. H. Travis, wife of Calvary's pastor, publicly charged that Rev. N. A. Mackey, pastor of the lower-class "shouting Baptist" North Clinton Street Church, had been bribed to oppose the protest. This denunciation was not only indicative of a split in Negro leadership along social class lines; it was also symptomatic of the protest committee's failure.

The school board retained the un-

graded classroom. In the following years, while the proportion of Negro pupils at the other elementary schools declined, it continued to rise at Ashland and Eastern. In the fall of 1905 the board created two new jim crow classes, one at Ashland and one at eastern, each consisting of about 35 first and second graders. At the same time about 150 other Negro pupils in the two schools remained in integrated classes.

A boycott, only hinted at in 1899, became a reality in 1905. Pressed, the board reluctantly arranged a special public hearing on December 4. This meeting was notable because for the first time board members overtly expressed their racial motivation, thus confirming the Negroes' fears. Passionately denying race prejudice, the board's vice-president nevertheless conceded that the board had been influenced by white parents and teachers who contended that the "different temperament" of Negroes made them unsuitable classmate of the whites. Ignoring the Negroes' appeals, the board unanimously decided that "whenever a sufficient number of Afro-American pupils are found in any one of the grades of any school, such pupils may be separately taught." Thus, it explicitly provided for segregation based upon race alone.

At a mass meeting the following night, speakers articulated the bitterness which the board's latest action engendered. John H. Stilwell, physician and Republican committeeman in neighboring Orange, angrily reported that his daughter had been offered a job in the East Orange school system if he would withdraw from the fight. Rev. Travis's son was overcome with emotion as he described the most recent encounter with the board: "When, with a Satan's grin akin to the regions of darkness, the superintendent . . . sat there last night and heard our complaint, a seed of anarchy, a seed of hatred for the white race, and a seed of revenge was implanted in me. If I had a pistol I really believe I would have been guilty of murder."

Actually some prominent whites were at this point championing the Negroe's cause. Young Travis himself concluded by saying: "But I think that those thoughts are now overcome, for we see here tonight that we have some white friends." Minutes later, his words received dramatic confirmation from the unexpected appearance of Supreme Court Justice J. Franklin Fort. Fort, a future governor, had hurried to the meeting as soon as he had read the newspaper account of the school board's action. Taking the rostrum he declared: " . . . If I were what they call an Afro-American I would die in my tracks before I would submit to this." Much encouraged by Fort's "powerful backing" the Negroes maintained their boycott and proceeded with plans to provide instruction for their children at Mt. Olive and Calvary Churches. The church classes — forerunners of today's Freedom Schools — opened as scheduled on December 11. Fort and his son were unsuccessful, however, in their efforts to get the mayor and the East Orange Republican committee to intercede with the board of education.

The problems faced by the protest leaders were compounded by cleavages within the Negro community. Rev. E. D. Samuels, Mackey's successor at the North Clinton Street Church, resigned from the protest organization in sharp disagreement over the boycott. There were also differences among the elite citizens identified with the movement, in part related to political factionalism within the Essex County Republican Party. James E. Churchman, an Orange mortician, was actually accused of condoning the jim crow classes. Shortly afterwards he led a bolt of dissidents from the Negro political club headed by Alfred Cosey of Newark, attorney for the protesters. When Churchman ran for alderman in 1906 his opponents made his alleged support of segregation a political issue; Churchman backers, how-

ever, pledged opposition to any jim crow classrooms. More serious was the loss of white support. After the first few days in January, 1906, indications of white interest pretty much disappeared. Fort's name, in fact, was no longer mentioned in connection with the matter.

Nevertheless the school board still faced an effective boycott and, since the law was unclear, it hesitated to take the matter to court. Accordingly on January 22 the Board rescinded the resolution explicitly calling for segregation. Three weeks after, a "truce" was arranged. The youngsters were to return to schools which they had not attended in the three months since the boycott began. There they would be assigned to classes according to their scores on placement examinations. The Negro leaders assumed that the separate classes would end, but the superintendent told reporters that children whose parents did not explicitly request an examination, would remain in the jim crow classes. When the youngsters returned on February 12, even those whose parents had asked for examinations were placed in the all-Negro class "for at least a few days." In anger many parents withdrew their children. Negro spokesmen accused the board of having broken its promise, but the board remained adamant. The boycott collapsed. All that the Negroes had gained was a reduction in the number of students in the separate classes.

SPRINGFIELD, OHIO

In 1887, when the Ohio legislature repealed the law authorinzing educational segregation, the Springfield school board integrated the pupils but dismissed the Negro teachers. Sporadic support for a dual school system, however, continued to come from some white parents whose children attended the school with the largest Negro enrollment, and from certain Negroes who regarded segregation as the only way to secure jobs for Negro teachers. Later, the rapid increase of Springfield's population that began with the First World War precipitated renewed efforts to resegregate the schools. Although the proportion of whites and blacks remained about the same, white awareness of the "Negro influx" was heightened by the fact that most of the Negro migrants settled in the Fulton Elementary School District. Located in an old, mixed neighborhood, Fulton also served an adjacent subdivision popularly, and with good reason, known as "Needmore" — an impoverished ghetto of recent southern migrants, some of them so poverty-stricken that they took sheets of tin from a neighboring city dump to construct their hovels. The proportion of Negroes in Fulton's student body rose from about 45 percent in 1914-15 to over 60 percent in 1920-21.

In 1921, three prominent Negro women, informed by the superintendent that he could not hired colored teachers so long as the schools were integrated, circulated a petition urging the creation of a separate institution. Others objected and the Springfield branch of the NAACP, while applauding the idea of hiring Negro teachers, voiced the fear that the school board might use the request " as an excuse to fasten upon this community that outrageous, un-American, un-democratic and un-christian institution of . . . Jim-Crow schools." The NAACP's plea to the board was unavailing, however, for the school system was dominated by avowed segregationists. Indeed, it was later discovered that the school superintendent and two members of the board belonged to the Ku Klux Klan. Thus, not surprisingly, in May, 1922, the board voted 3 to 2 to make Fulton an all-Negro elementary school.

The Negro community and its institutions were deeply split. In theNAACP branch and the two elite churches were to be found the leaders of both the supporters and opponents of separate schools. In contrast to East Orange, the ministers of these two churches advocated the separate school while the boycott's sole sup-

porter among the preachers was Rev. Pleas B. Broughton, pastor of Needmore's "Hell-fire" Mt. Zion Baptist Church. The cleavage was not, however, correlated with social class distinctions, In fact, the leaders of the boycott were an upper class Negro group. The president was Charles L. Johnson, superintendent of the Champion Chemical plant which employed many Negroes ranging from janitors to chemists. Of thirty-two persons arrested in a picketing incident at Fulton School in November, 1922, ten were in the professional and business class; three others were white collar workers; two were college students; nine were skilled workers; and eight were in the unskilled laboring class. On the other hand, as one observer said, the Negro supporters of the segregated schools "represent a wide diversity of personal interests: some with political aspirations, some cherishing the notion of independent educational development, and some with the more immediately practical hope of employment as teachers."

In part, the split over the school issue was associated with a political cleavage. Despite the fragmentary evidence that survives concerning Negro participation in the city's politics, two things are clear. One is that the Clark County Republican leadership headed by William Copenhaver, father of one of the Klan members on the school board, was segregationist. At one point, Copenhaver Sr. informed the Negro leaders that only whites would run the city and that he personally favored segregated schools. Secondly, Necondly, Negroes with political aspirations in Republican-dominated Springfield took their cues from the white Republican chieftains. The two leading Negro politicians, George W. Eliot, school board janitor and president of the Center Street YMCA (for Negroes), and Olie V. Gregory, librarian of the Springfield Bar Association, were unable to speak out against the segregation at Fulton because of their political loyalties. The ministers of the two elite churches, and that state leader of the Negro Oddfellows, a Springfield resident who openly advocated separate schools, were also political types who spoke for the Republicans. On the other hand, some of those most prominently associated with the boycott, notably the NAACP branch president Sully Jaymes, urged Negroes to vote for the Democrats rather than to remain unswervingly loyal to the Republicans who had deserted them. Since Negroes were generally Republican in this period, it was the prejudiced actions of the local Republican influentials that undoubtedly accounted for this sharp political cleavage.

In the face of the division of its membership, the local NAACP branch was practically immobilized for effective protest. Old residents recalled that the branch had "turned pink tea," that "as a working organization the NAACP went flop." It is true that the boycott leaders appealed to the national NAACP headquarters for help, and that the national office became exceedingly interested in the case. Its officers urged the branch to take action, attempted to provide assistance, and were appalled when the lack of unity in the branch led the militants to create a new organization to fight the school issue. Nevertheless, even though Jaymes, the branch president, was a prominent leader in the protest, effective protest was clearly organized outside the local branch.

With the NAACP immobilized, the militants established the Civil Rights Protective League about the middle of July, 1922. Early in September, at a mass meeting in Broughton's church, the assembled citizens voted to set up a picket line and to keep their children out of Fulton school. The League's strategy was to use a boycott to force the issue into the courts. All necessary legal assistance for parents arrested under the truancy law was to be provided by three attornys, including Sully Jaymes and A.N.Summers, a former state supreme court justice and a distinguished old-line Republican who had

been identified as a friend of the race throughout his career. Half the students at Fulton remained away the first day. By the end of the week the boycott was 75% effective. The board, however, declined to prosecute those who kept their children out of school, thus undermining the League's strategy. Accordingly, late in September, League officials obtained a temporary injunction in the court of common pleas. But despite the court order the board of education failed to reassign the white students.

By November, signs of sagging morale were evident. More dramatic steps seemed required to compel a real confrontation in the courts. Accordingly, on the morning of November 7, the demonstrators arrived at the school, 150 strong, prepared to block the entrance of the teachers. When an automobile arrived with several teachers, the crowd surged into the street, and some pickets jumped on the running board. In the melee a few rocks were thrown. Next day, 32 persons, including the entire leadership of the League, were arrested.

Other arrests followed, for the board now took sterner measures, and intimidated lower-class parents by starting prosecutions under the compulsory attendance law. Five parents — all unskilled working class people — were charged in magistrate's court. The court, however, took a sympathetic view. On November 28, a case against Laura Jackson, a laundress, was dismissed after she testified about her unsuccessful efforts to register her children at a school other than Fulton. A couple weeks later proceedings against Waldo Bailey, a laborer accused of rioting and assaulting the teacher in the November 7 demonstration, produced an even more significant victory. Defense attorneys admitted that Bailey had jumped on the car but denied that he had committed assault. The jury found him not guilty. Charges against the others were subsequently also dropped.

Meanwhile, the boycott continued, and on January 31, 1923 the judge in the court of common pleas granted a permanent injunction restraining the school board from transferring children on the basis of color. He ordered the board to reopen Fulton on an integrated basis in the fall; for the remainder of the school year he directed that all children in the district be permitted to attend whatever school they chose. The board, however, simply authorized its attorney to appeal, and Negro parents discovered that the principals of nearby schools still refused to admit their children during the spring semester. At the end of the summer, with no decision from the appellate court and with Fulton therefore scheduled to reopen on an integrated basis, school superintendent George E. McCord dismissed every one of the Negro teachers.

In the fall of 1923 a school board election resulted in the resounding defeat of a pro-McCord slate, whom the Ku Klux Klan had endorsed. Although Negroes tried to make McCord's Klan membership and the Fulton school matter campaign issues, actually the Klan emerged victorious in contests for the city commission and police judge; the defeat of McCord's supporters stemmed from other actions of the superintendent, who had alienated many people. McCord resigned, and the board authorized its attorney to withdraw the Fulton case from the appellate court. Nevertheless, there was no long-range victory for the Negroes. Whites residing in the Fulton School District were soon able to transfer to other schools, while Negroes were denied that privilege. In 1936 the school board resumed the practice of providing the public with data on school boundaries and racial proportions which it had discreetly suspended in 1924. At that time the neighborhood was still a mixed one. Nevertheless, the Fulton School District, its borders gerrymandered, was 97% Negro. The teaching staff remained all white until the board dropped its discriminatory employment policy during the 1940's.

DAYTON, OHIO

Dayton integrated its schools in accordance with the law of 1887, but, unlike Springfield, did not dismiss its Negro teachers. Then, early in the century, the single remaining colored teacher was placed in charge of a separate class for Negro first and second graders at the Garfield school. This pattern was expanded as the school board appointed more Negro teachers in 1910 and 1913. About the same time it placed the colored children at Garfield in an annex behind the school. Over the years, as the Negro population of Dayton grew, the newcomers clustered largely on the West Side, and the number of Garfield Negro annexes increased to three. Then, in 1924, at the Willard elementary school, the board instituted separate classes for allegedly retarded Negro pupils who were to be taught in the basement and required to enter by a special rear door.

In Dayton, teaching positions in the jim crow classes proved even more of an attraction than they did in Springfield. As Robert W. Bagnall, the NAACP's director of branches, observed in 1925, the Garfield annexes "came into being as the result of a request of colored people who desired colored teachers in the school." Supporters of the jim crow system ranged from professional people to the members of the Hand of Ethiopia, an organization headed by a socially prominent clubwoman but consisting almost entirely of humble working-class people, which had been founded about 1910.

Nevertheless, the introduction of separate classes at Willard in 1924 precipitated a stormy outbreak. The insulting nature of the arrangements (the basement classes and rear door), the public announcement that students placed in them were retarded, and the assignment to these classes of some children of normal achievement certainly made the situation at Willard appear very different from that at Garfield and produced a furor.

There was, however, a clearcut division in the Negro community on the issue. Much of the city's Negro elite was wedded to the by now well-institutionalized system of separate classes. The Cleveland *Gazette*, a Negro weekly, pointedly charged that "our professional men are at the bottom of the whole affair, securing positions for their wives and friends." Political types, like certain of the lawyers, found it difficult to speak out on the issue, even if they privately sympathized with the protesters. Yet, it is impossible to detect any clear-cut social or occupational correlations. The preachers, for example, were divided. The head of the Negro YMCA, taking his cue from his superiors downtown, strongly discouraged his secretary of boys' work, O. O. Morris, from participating in the protest. Yet Morris was the most dynamic figure in the whole movement. Other officers of the Parents Protective Association, which led the boycott, ranged from a foundry worker, Otto Reese, its president, to E. T. Banks, deputy clerk of the municipal court, and J. P. Jetton, a lawyer and former president of the Dayton branch of the NAACP. The Hand of Ethiopia, though silent at this time, later, in January, 1925 emerged as an active critic of an attempt to desegregate the Garfield School.

More significant than class or occupation in determining one's position on the school question was length of residence in Dayton. When Bagnall arrived in the city he found that "most of those conducting the fight are new-comers from the South. Very few old citizens are interested." It is true that some of the leaders like Banks and Otto Reese were old Dayton citizens, and that the names of those who filed suits against the board of education were of people who had resided in the city since before the First World War. Yet, a man like O. O. Morris was a newcomer who moved to Dayton in 1919. In general, active support for the movement came from recent settlers

who had no vested interest in the system of school segregation. Moreover, those whose children were most likely to be assigned to the basement classrooms were undoubtedly the recent working-class migrants from the South with its inferior system of education. Finally, a generational factor was involved: the proposal for the boycott actually came from a group of high school youths whom Morris had organized earlier as part of a campaign to place Negroes on the high school athletic teams. Many of these youths were children of old residents, but they sharply disagreed with their parents on the issue.

The local NAACP branch, characterized as it was by a long history of inactivity, elected to remain on the sidelines. Accordingly in August, 1924, after the youths had raised the issue, the adult militants, including many NAACP members, organized a Parents Protective Association. Nevertheless, the leaders of the Protective Association looked to the national NAACP for support, and in turn the national office maintained an active interest throughout the struggle.

Three days before school opened, at a mass meeting sponsored by the Protective Association, the assembled citizens formally notified the board of education that their children would not attend the new basement classes, and raised $100 for legal proceedings. On the day school opened, pickets were posted around the building, and only eight children crossed the picket line to enter the basement. Next day two parents, Estella Pittman and Ophelia Cartwright, wives of a plasterer and a carwasher respectively, applied to the common pleas court for an injunction against the board.

As soon as the boycott was called, O. O. Morris wired the NAACP national office for assistance. The national office telegraphed back that it considered the case so important that it would send a staff member to the scene. A week later Robert Bagnall spent two days in the city. Bagnall was the best-known exponent of the national NAACP's opposition to educational segregation, and of the organization's insistence that agitation should be conducted for the employment of Negro teachers in integrated schools. Upon arriving in Dayton, Bagnall conferred with the executive committee of the local branch, addressed two mass meetings and raised nearly $500 for the fight, brought the leaders of the branch and the Protective Association together, and got them to agree to fight the case jointly.

During his visit the judge of the common pleas court, in an informal proceeding, heard arguments on the petition for injunction, and gave both sides a week to get together to settle the matter out of court. No decision was ever handed down.

Accordingly, the opponents of the jim crow classes decided upon a new tactic. On January 9, 1925, Earl Reese, a truck driver, filed suit on behalf of his two children against the separate Garfield annexes. If anything, the community was even more sharply divided than before, and Morris again appealed for outside assistance to the national NAACP, which once more dispatched Bagnall to the scene. Mrs. Julia Higgins, president of the Hand of Ethiopia, publicly attacked Reese. She denied condoning segregation, but insisted that without segregated classes Negroes would be denied the opportunity to teach, and maintained that she embraced voluntary separation as an ideal because it would "inspire the young colored people to seek ideas of their own great men and women." The local NAACP, despite encouragement from the national office, was quite dead and did not become officially involved in the Garfield school fight. Instead it was O. O. Morris, this time in his capacity as president of the local Alpha Phi Alpha chapter, who undertook to raise funds, much of which he obtained as an unpublicized donation from one of the city's most prominent white businessmen.

The first court victory came in July, 1925, when the country court of appeals ruled in favor of the Reese children. The school board appealed to the Ohio Supreme Court, which in February, 1926 ruled unanimously that the segregation was illegal. In view of this decision the case involving the Willard school, which had in the meantime reintegrated its classes, was dismissed. The Pittsburgh *Courier*, the leading Negro weekly of the time, commented: "Perhaps no victory that has been won in a state supreme court recently has such far reaching significance to colored Americans as this."

Yet, here again, school authorities found ways to effectively circumvent the courts. Board members told the press that "unofficially" they favored "voluntary" separate schools for Negroes, and the Dayton school officials did not seriously attempt to carry out the decree of the state supreme court. Soon after the decision, in fact, there were disquieting reports of continuing separate classes at Garfield and resegregation at Willard. In the next few years, gerrymandering and a policy of liberal transfers for whites created more segregation than ever before.

CONCLUSION

All four boycotts shared certain significant similarities. In the first place they were all essentially conservative protest movements: Their aim was to preserve an older order of unsegregated education, protected by legislative enactment. It was just because they were rebelling against a new system that ran counter to established law that the protesters in each case so confidently boycotted the schools, and, except for East Orange, optimistically looked to the judiciary for support. This was most dramatically illustrated in Springfield, where the Negroes wanted the school board to charge them with disobeying the attendance law, and when the board failed to do so, used more drastic methods to get the case into the courts. Moreover, in both states in which appeals were made to the courts, the Negroes were ultimately sustained by the highest judicial authority. Nevertheless, whether success came through the courts or — as in East Orange — through negotiations with the school board, in all four instances the Negroes won an empty victory.

Why was it that the victories proved empty? There are those who would point to the lack of unity within the Negro community. As this article demonstrates, such cleavages are a complex subject, and the types of people who supported and opposed the protest varied widely from city to city. Differences among Negroes on this issue tended to follow cleavages already existing in the community. This was most evident in Springfield, where both political influences and hostility between the lower-class and elite preachers seemed to play a significant role, or in East Orange, where social class distinctions seemed to have had a paramount influnence. One point, however, is noteworthy: In analyzing the data from all four cities one finds a remarkable lack of correlation between social status and attitude toward the boycotts. In East Orange, the poor, southern migrants seemed indifferent or hostile; in Springfield and to a large extent in Dayton they supported the boycott. In East Orange and Springfield, the boycott leaders were drawn from the professional and entrepreneurial elite; in Alton, they were drawn from the higher class of blue-collar workers; in Dayton, they were drawn from both groups. In East Orange, the bourgeoisie was solidly behind the protest; in Springfield, it was split down the middle; in Dayton, it was in the main opposed.

The explanation of the highly varied patterns of response to the policy of school segregation among the Negroes of the four cities would seem largely to lie with the fact that in each case different groups of individuals found the segregation to be directly harmful or beneficial to their own immediate interests. Thus in Dayton, much of the support for the

boycott came from recent migrants whose children were personally insulted by the new arrangements. On the other hand, the acceptance which people of similar background gave to separate classes in East Orange is undoubtedly related to the personality of their minister and the disdain with which he was certainly treated by the ministers of the elite churches. Again, politically ambitious types in Springfield and, to a lesser extent, possibly in East Orange and Dayton, found it necessary to accommodate to the dominant political cliques. Teachers and would-be teachers and their relatives, despairing of the opportunity to hold jobs in mixed school systems, favored separation. This response was notable in the two cities with normal schools which upwardly mobile people of modest means could attend without great financial strain — in Springfield and especially in Dayton, with its long tradition of separate classes taught by Negroes. In both these towns specific local conditions create strong institutional pulls toward acceptance of segregation in the schools. In general, where the political and educational establishment had maintained roots in the Negro community and offered concrete rewards to those who would accommodate to white thinking, one found the most serious divisiveness in the Negro community. In Alton, where no local Negroes receiving teaching positions and where the politicians then in office had no connection with the Negro community, the unity of the Negroes was the most complete.

Despite the fact that the cleavages within the Negro community loom so large in the evidence, a careful analysis indicates that lack of unity among the Negroes did not determine the outcome of the struggle. Only in Dayton can it be said that the split was a serious factor militating against the survival of the protest movement. In Springfield, the boycott lasted a semester, and in East Orange for about six months, despite the opposition to it within the Negro community — and these boycotts were upwards of 75% effective. The critical test case, however, is Alton. There, despite the offer of jobs for Negro teachers, the Negro community remained remarkably unified for over a decade; overt signs of a split only appeared toward the very end of the struggle.

Even in Alton, the protest movement was not broken until those whites who had been encouraging it withdrew their support and urged the Negroes to accept the separate schools. In East Orange, also, it was clearly the withdrawal of the support of prominent upper class whites who at first supported the Negroes, that spelled the doom of the protest. In both these towns and also in Springfield as well as to some extent in Dayton, support for Negroes came from aristocratic whites, mainly Republican, many of whom had supported the Negro struggle for emancipation and equal rights back to the nineteenth century. Such men were declining in political power, even within the Republican Party by the time the boycotts took place.

In short, it is our thesis that the decisive factor in the defeats — or empty victories — of the Negro protesters in all these cases was the attitude of the dominant whites. As pointed out earlier, all the boycotts occurred at a time of rising anti-Negro prejudice. In Alton, this tendency was intensified by the city's location in an area where every other community violated the state civil rights law; in Springfield, East Orange, and Dayton, it was exacerbated by white perception of a "Negro invasion" that flowed from the rising migration to the northern cities. Yet, in spite of their growing numbers, Negroes in these towns were such a small minority that they were politically impotent. Under the circumstances the Negroes had the law, the higher courts, and many upper-class whites on their side; but the local white political machines and school boards, reflecting and deferring to popular white prejudice, were able to circumvent the courts and to emasculate the Negroes' victories.

Thus, in retrospect the defeat of the boycotts would appear to have been almost inevitable. Even if there had been greater unity among the Negroes, their essential powerlessness as a small minority lacking substantial and sustained support from members of the majority group, made their position untenable. The remarkable thing is that Negroes were able to resist as effectively as they did.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Due to space limitations, we have decided not to include the footnotes for this article. Accordingly, we are appending this brief bibliographical note. The authors will supply documentation for specific points to readers requesting it. For an extended treatment of the East Orange and Alton boycotts, with complete annotation, see August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, "Early Boycotts of Segregated Schools: The East Orange, New Jersey Experience, 1899-1906," *History of Education Quarterly*, Spring, 1967; and "Early Boycotts of Segregated Schools: The Alton, Illinois Case, 1897-1908," to be published in the *Journal of Negro Education*, Winter, 1968.

A major source of information on all four boycotts were the local daily newspapers: the Alton *Daily Sentinel*, Alton *Evening Telegraph*, and St. Louis *Post-Dispatch;* the Newark *Evening News* and the weekly East Orange *Gazette;* the Springfield *Daily Sun* and *Daily News;* and the Dayton *Journal* and *Daily News*. The Negro weeklies, especially the Washington *Bee*, the Baltimore *Afro-American*, the Cleveland *Gazette*, and the Pittsburgh *Courier* were also helpful.

We consulted the City Council Minutes of Alton, and the Minutes and Annual Reports of the School Boards in all four cities. Demographic data were obtained from the federal census reports of 1900, 1910, and 1920, and from the New Jersey state census reports of 1895 and 1905. City directories were an important source of occupational data. Local county histories proved useful in connection with the study of the Alton and Springfield boycotts. *Opportunity* and *Crisis*, organs respectively of the National Urban League and the NAACP had some helpful materials for the later two boycotts, as did T. J. Woofter, *Negro Problems in Cities* (New York, 1928) and Horace Mann Bond, *The Education of the Negro in the American Social Order* (New York, 1934, 1966).

Interviews with long-time residents of East Orange and Alton and with surviving leaders of the Springfield and Dayton protests proved extraordinarily valuable. Records of court proceedings provided a rich mine of information for the Alton and Springfield protests. Indispensable for studying the Springfield and particularly the Dayton boycotts were the NAACP Archives at the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress.

Every day Federal money and power are used to build racial ghettos. Federal benefits are creating community patterns and conditions in the housing supply which build in segregation. Federal agencies allow municipalities to select sites for federally-aided low-cost housing in areas where segregation is foreordained. FHA continues doing business with discriminatory builders, lenders, and real estate brokers. Urban renewal and highway projects destroy integrated neighborhoods and swell the ghettos. Federal loans and grants are poured into restricted white suburban communities for schools, hospitals, water and sewer systems and other facilities. Government installations and plants with Federal contracts locate in areas where employment opportunities are cancelled out by racial barriers to housing.

—National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing, *How the Federal Government Builds Ghettos* (1967)

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Published bi-monthly by
INTEGRATED EDUCATION
ASSOCIATES, 343 South
Dearborn Street
Chicago, Illinois 60604
Telephone 922-8361

INTEGRATED EDUCATION
Vol. V, No. 4
Copyright, 1967, INTEGRATED
EDUCATION ASSOCIATES

Subscription rate:
$4.00 per year for six issues;
75 cents for single copy

Indexed in:
Public Affairs Information Service

Index to Periodical Articles By and About Negroes

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